

## 11 Things To Say by Just-Your-AAverage-FanGGurl

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**Summary:** “This song is called 11 Things to Say. There was a miscommunication, and I need to show someone how much they mean to me.. so, well, enjoy!” The audience went wild. An AU where, in 2019, Mike is in a boy band, and they take a much needed break for the summer..In Hawkins, Indiana, the town where nothing ever happens. Yet El can still turn his world Upside Down.

## 1. Hawkins

Mike was walking down the street of his new town, when a girl on a bike barreled into him.

Mike groaned as he sat up. "What the-"

"I'm so sorry!" The girl stood up. She was stunning. The nameless girl had brown hair that was cut above her shoulders, and golden brown eyes. "Are you okay?" She offered him her hand.

"Yeah." He took it gratefully, and he rose up to be a head taller than her.

"I'm Eleven."

Mike stared at her, expecting some sort of recognition. It's what he gets most of the time with new people. Chorus of, "Omg! Mike Wheeler? *The* Mike? From Stranger Things? Can I get an autograph?"

"Umm.." she waved her free hand in Mike's face. "Do you have a name?"

Mike realized they were still holding hands. He pulled away. "You don't know who I am?"

"Am I supposed to?"

"No! No, I'm Mike." He scratched his head awkwardly.

"Cool." She smiled. "I haven't seen you around Hawkins before?"

"Oh, yeah. Me and a couple friends just moved here. For the summer."

"By yourselves?"

"Yeah. It's a, um," Mike wasn't good at coming up with on the spot lies. "We're um.. finding ourselves. Yeah." In truth, they were supposed to be finding inspiration for their next album.

"Fun. Well, I have somewhere to be. So, I'll see you around, I guess." Eleven pulled up her bike and hopped on.

"Yeah. See ya."

Mike decided he would turn around and walk home. He had to tell the boys about today! Someone didn't know who he was!

It was like a breath of fresh air. His band, Stranger Things, was in between tours, not to mention albums. Mike doesn't think he's ever met someone who hasn't wanted something from him!

"Guys!" He burst through his front door. "You're never gonna believe this. I found someone here who'd doesn't know who we are!"

"Wow," Dustin said, "Lucas and I went to the mall and we were mobbed by like 50 teenage girls."

"Thank god I stayed home." Will popped into the basement. "Should we order pizza for dinner?"

"Yes!" The three other boys yelled.

"Okay," Will chuckled. "I'll get right on that. I'll order crazy bread too."

"Will I love you!!" Dustin screamed.

The boys laughed.

In the spotlight, the boys had their facades. Dustin is the funny one, Lucas is the sarcastic one, Will is the shy one, Mike is the cute one. Mike is the ladies man, the one who's always featured in Pop Magazines, and questionnaires, and he's shipped with so many others. If he had to put anyone as the Ladies man, it would actually be Lucas.

In reality, however, they were just a bunch of music nerds who loved DD. But, that was not the image their label wanted to display.

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The next day, Mike decided to walk down the the quarry. It had icy

cold water, even in the beginning of summer.

"Well, fancy seeing you here!" A voice came from behind him, scaring Mike to near death.

He cursed. "Eleven! God, you scared me."

She laughed. "Oh really? I couldn't tell."

Mike joined her laughter. She smiled. "If we're gonna keep running into each other, I think we're gonna have to consider each other friends."

"I wouldn't be opposed to that." Mike leaned back on a rock.

"Good."

"Great."

"Perfect."

They burst into a fit of laughter. Mike surveyed Eleven. She looked like she had just stepped out of an 80's TV show. She had on a blue paint splattered shirt, along with suspenders and a yellow scrunchie. But damn, the style fit her.

She plopped down next to me. "How has 'finding yourself' been?"

"Oh," Mike sat there wide eyed. "It's been very.. finding? I feel found already."

"Great.. for you?" She laughed. "I don't know what to say."

She stepped onto the rocks beside where he was laying. "This is where I come to be alone. I'm surprised you found it, it's pretty well hidden."

*So is this town*, Mike thought. They two stayed there talking for *two hours*. Mike hasn't held that long of a conversation with anyone except his band and his family. But, he learned a lot about her. She was adopted, and has been living with her dad for four years. But when Mike asked about before that, she got really quiet. He decided

not to pressure. She's turning 16 in three weeks, and she's looking forward to it. Eleven is homeschooled, but since her dad is the Chief Of Police in Hawkins, she knows everyone and everyone knows her.

Mike's phone dinged. It was Will. He had decided he was going to cook dinner, and he warned Mike to call the fire department if Will himself hadn't called him in an hour!

"I might have to go save my friends from dying from food poisoning here in a bit," Mike laughed.

"Why don't we leave now?" Eleven shrugged. "I can walk you home."

Mike smiled. "Really?" Has he ever been walked home by a girl before? He was pretty sure it was supposed to be the other way around. Not that Eleven was more than a friend. He barely knew her, how could she even be more?

"Definitely." She and Mike stood up. "Oh, and one more thing-"

*Splash!* Mike had fallen into the quarry! The icy water chilled him to the bone.

"-there's a loose stone right in front of you." El finished her sentence before bursting out laughing. "Oh my god Mike, that was hilarious!"

"I'm gonna get you back for laughing, and when you're least expecting it!" Though, Mike couldn't help but join her in her laughter. Her laugh was contagious, and it made him feel some sort of way, a way he couldn't explain.

"Oh really?" She giggled. "We'll see about that."

He sighed. "Yknow, I'm actually too nice to get you back. But, as my new, dear friend." He smiled sweetly and stuck his hand out of the water. "Could you please give me a hand and help me out of the icy quarry?"

Still giggling, Eleven grabbed his hand. But the tables were turned against her, and Mike pulled her straight in.

El gasped for air. "Mike!" She screeched.

"I said I'd get you back, didn't I Eleven?"

She put her hands on his shoulders so she could breathe. Eleven couldn't stand in this water, but Mike, being as tall as he was, could. "I should've seen that coming." She shook her head.

He noticed how close they were. Mike could feel the water move as he kicked her feet every once in a while, and he could smell her minty breath. She noticed too, and she laughed and started kicking her way to shore. "Looks like I'm going to be spending a lot more time at your house tonight."

He swam after her and she reached the rocks. As soon as she was on dry land, she took off running. "Eleven! Wait!" Mike sprinted after her. *How the hell could she run so fast?* He could hear her wet tennis shoes squeaking as she ran ahead. He would've kept going... if not for the raging cramp in his side. Eventually, he caught up to Eleven.

"I've been thinking," She paused.

Mike waved his hand. "About?"

"You can call me El. Short for Eleven." She smiled.

"Alright, *El*." Mike smiled. El was a pretty great friend, though he had only known her for two days. She smiled back at him.

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"So, I kinda forgot that I don't own any girl clothes. But," he handed her a sweatshirt, shirt, and some sweatpants. "I have these."

"Thank you, Mike." She walked to the bathroom to change. El kept thinking about how familiar Mike looked. She could swear that she's seen him somewhere before, but he just moved to Hawkins... Mike was waiting for her in the hallway.

"You don't look half bad in my clothes," He winked and then made a choking sound, as if he was surprised at what he had said. Was he *flirting* with her? "I'm sorry, that wasn't me."

And Mike was right. That wasn't him, it was the *other* Mike Wheeler,

the one specifically trained for the camera. But he liked the way El's cheeks flushed pink when he said it. "Let's go to the basement, you can meet my friends."

She nodded and then shuffled along behind him. In the basement were three more boys. *Lucas, Dustin, and Will* was the one in the kitchen. Repeating their names in her head was the only way she would remember them later. El noticed instruments in the corner. "You play?" She walked over to a pretty acoustic guitar.

"Yeah," Mike flushed red. "Um.. since I was little. But now I mostly play electric."

"Do you mind?" She put her hand on the neck of the instrument.

"No, no, go ahead!" He stepped back and watched her.

Eleven picked up the instrument and swung it's strap over her shoulder. She got the feel of the guitar before she played. The song was easily identifiable by Mike as *You Don't Mess Around With Jim* by Jim Croce, though he had never heard it played on acoustic before. She hummed along with it.

"A-doo umdoo do do dee dill dee dee dee!" Mike laughed. "Where'd you learn to play?"

She smiled. "It's just something my dad taught me. His name is Jim, and the song is very fitting."

Will came bowling down the stairs. "Guys! I burned the noodles!"

Lucas muttered, "How do you burn noodles in water.."

"But," He continued, "I figured if Eleven was okay with it, we could order Chinese Food?"

"That would be great! Eleven," Lucas clasped his hands together. "Please say yes. Anything is better than Will trying to cook!"

She giggled. "Sure. Chinese food it is!"

She thought of her best friend Max, who was currently in Canada.

She loved the Chinese Food place here, and would eat it every day if she could. She missed Max a lot, but she would be back just in time for El's birthday!

"Earth to El," Mike waved his hand in her face. "We were asking if you'd like to watch a movie?"

"Sure." El smiled and sat down on the couch. After 15 long minutes of arguing, everyone decided on Disney's Aladdin. Mike told her that it was Dustin's favorite Disney movie *ever*.

That night was one of the best nights El Hopper had ever had.

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## 2. The Mike Wheeler

Eleven was very groggy when she heard knocking at her door. In fact, she didn't believe there actually was knocking at her bedroom door until it opened. A very familiar redhead walked through the door. "If you're not up in- oh! You're awake!"

"Max!" Eleven jumped out of her bed to throw her arms around the girl.

"I got back in last night. Happy early birthday!" It was two days before Eleven's birthday. Max smiled at her. "Now get dressed loser, we're going shopping!"

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"So this boy Mike," Max pursed her lips. "What happens if I don't approve?" She gasped. "Has Hopper even approved? And does he know?"

"Oh trust me, you'll approve. And..." Eleven twisted one of her curls around her finger. "I haven't exactly told Hopper yet. I'm waiting to tell Hopper before I can tell Mike about me."

Max interrupted her. "Ohmygod El! You have feelings for a boy, and you haven't told Hopper? Wow, I thought there wasn't anything you didn't tell him. "

Max giggled. El sighed dramatically. "It's not like that! I don't *feel* for him... but I do not know how Hopper will react if I tell him that I have a friend who is a boy. He will think the exact same thing!"

El scoffed. "Feel for Mike? No way."

Max pulled her into the Gap. She pulled out some silly shirts for her and El to try on. "El, darling, the way you were talking about Mike? There's something there."

El giggled as Max handed her a tube top. "Max, this isn't my style."

"Alright then, let's leave. There's a skate shop that I wanna check

out!"

They walked out of the store arm in arm, down to the skate shop. All El could think about was how much she had missed her best friend.

Max got so close to the window of the skate shop that El could see her breath on the window. "Man," She said, "I can't wait to get home and pull out my skateboard. Canada was very boring without you and my skateboard. I wish could've text you."

El agreed with her. But almost as soon as they had reached the Skate Shop, they had left. On their way out, they passed a magazine stand. Crowded around it were a bunch of girls.

El stood on her tip toes, but she still couldn't see what they were looking at. Max elbowed her. "Wanna go see what they're looking at?" She smirked.

The two girls walked over and slowly made their way into the crowd of girls. They were crowding around a Seventeen magazine... that had *Mike Wheeler*??? On the cover? "What the hell?" El slapped ten dollars on the counter and ran out of the mall.

"El?" Max panted. "What's wrong?"

El surveyed the magazine. This couldn't possibly be *her* Mike Wheeler. But somehow, he had the same corkscrew hair, the same freckles, and *damn*, his cheekbones. The magazine company noted on his cheekbones in the article. They were "cheekbones to *die* for." El pointed back to the front cover. "Mike."

"You're kidding."

"No, that's Mike!"

Max closed her eyes. "Let me get this straight. For over a month now, you've been friends with *the Mike Wheeler*? And you didn't know? Is the rest of his band here?"

"Yes!" El was pissed. She remembered when she first met him, when he asked if she knew who he was. He could've just told her right then and there! But he didn't. He *lied*. "Max, let's go to his house."

"I'm down. We're gonna yell at *the* Mike Wheeler."

"Stop calling him that!"

"Okay, okay."

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Mike was awoken by pounding on his front door. He looked at his clock. It was almost 11:30 am. Who would be at his house pounding on his door?

He and El had plans today at 2. So he was surprised when he opened his door to a very pissed off El, who marched into his house followed by an unfamiliar redhead.

"What is this?" El threw a magazine at Mike, and he cursed when he saw the front cover.

"Ah, uh.." Mike was panicking. Why on earth couldn't he form a sentence?

"You. Lied." El stabbed her finger into Mike's chest. She was so angry at the fact that he lied to her. But why?

Lucas walked into the room. "What is going on here?"

"God, yknow what, *Mike*?" The redhead spit his name out with such venom it even made Lucas wince. "Don't bother. We're out of here. C'mon El." She turned and marched out the door, El hot on her heels.

The only thing Mike felt was fear. Was he going to lose El? He reached out and grabbed her hand. "Eleven," Mike pleaded, "Please stay. I can explain, I promise."

El stunned towards him slowly. When she saw the look on his face, she almost felt bad. He looked so panicked! "Promise?"

He nodded. "I swear. Just please, come upstairs."

"Max, can you stay down here?"

"Sure." But Max still looked at Mike warily.

Mike led her upstairs to his room. They both sat down on the bed. "Do you want me to start from the beginning?"

"Yes."

"So, about two years ago Lucas, Will, Dustin, and I started a band. We just posted covers and some originals on our YouTube channel, and we definitely didn't expect it to go anywhere. But one day we got an offer from a talent agent. He said that he could help us get our work out there, so we decided to work with him."

He started getting us gigs and we became more and more comfortable playing in front of live audiences. One day, he got us a really important gig. He told us that someone from a big record label was going to be watching us perform to see if we were any good."

And we got the deal with him. But he told us he needed us to be less alternative, and more pop. Alternative pop. Think Panic! at the Disco. I guess that's really when we got our claim to fame. We've had two albums and two tours. We also do covers and such."

But when you're in the spotlight, you rarely meet people who want to be your friend. Most of the time, they just want something from you. And I guess that's why I didn't tell you. El, you became one of my closest friends. Like as close as the rest of the guys and I are, if not closer. And you never wanted something from me. You never wanted a shout out on instagram, or money, or an autograph."

But I am really sorry that I didn't tell you. I should've, and I realize my mistake. I'll do anything to make it up to you," Mike sighed, "And if you do end up walking out the door, I will chase after you until you come back. And I'll bring eggos." Mike cracked a small smile.

"I'm sorry for yelling."

"No, don't apologize. You had every right to yell. I lied to you." Mike truly did feel horrible for lying to her. "No more secrets?"

El felt guilty as she said it. "No more secrets." She was keeping a huge one from him. Once he hears it, she thought he might not want to be

her friend anymore. But he was Mike. He was.. *different. But El did have a lot of baggage.*

Mike smiled. He realized they were holding hands. He knew he should pull away, so he stood up. "Let's go downstairs." A little part of Mike almost wished that he could've still held her hand. He shouldn't be feeling like that though. He was just going to have to leave El when summer was over. But Mike didn't want to think about it.

"I need to use the restroom. I will meet you downstairs." El walked in the opposite direction down the hallway.

"Okay, you guys." Mike rushed downstairs to where Dustin, Max, and Lucas were deep in conversation. He interrupted them. "Sorry, but this is important! I think we should throw El a surprise party. Here. On her birthday."

"That's actually a great idea," Max stood up and stuck out her hand for a handshake. "I'm Max. Sorry, about earlier. But El is my best friend and I will protect her at all costs." She narrowed her eyes at Mike. "If you hurt her, I will hurt you."

"What?"

Lucas put his hand up. "Anyways.. a surprise party sounds great. But who's gonna talk to her dad?"

"I will." Mike said, "I'll go down to the police station tomorrow."

"Okay, and I'll be the one to bring her to the house." Max smirked. "I'll just drag her down to the Skate Shop, and I'll make sure she eats something party appropriate. Just- no one tell her. Obviously. But if she brings up her birthday, then just brush it off."

"You skate?"

Mike went down into the basement, leaving Max and Lucas in their own little world. This was going to be the best birthday Mike had ever planned.

### 3. Happy Birthday El!

Mike was walking to the station. He wasn't supposed to be walking, but he ditched his body guards. Since Dustin and Lucas had been practically attacked at the mall, security was higher than it should be in this small town.

Eventually, he made it into the sheriffs office. "Hi, Cheif Hopper?"

The guy grunted. "Mike Wheeler."

"You know who I am?"

The Cheif scoffed, "El talks about you all the time. But I also know that you're supposed to have a body guard. May I ask where he is?"

Mike laughed awkwardly, "Thats besides the point. I came to ask about El."

This immediately got Hopper's attention. "You her boyfriend? Is there something she didn't tell me?"

"No!" Mike *knew* that he looked like a tomato. Why did everyone think he liked her? "It's not like that. Not at all. But anyways, I wanted to throw her a surprise birthday party?"

Hopper smirked. He knew that look. That was *the look*. The look that every teenage boy gets when he is head over heels for some special girl. In that case, Mike's special girl was his daughter. Did Mike even know about El's past? "What were you thinking?"

"Well, Max will take her to the mall for a distraction, while we get set up at my house. You would be there too. Eventually, Max will bring El back to my place, and then we'd surprise her. I'll bring cake and decorations and stuff, so all you really need to do is be there. Around 1. " Mike shrugged.

"Sounds great to me." Hopper lit a cigarette. "And listen, kiddo, don't hurt her. Because if you do, I can garuntee that both Max *and* I will have your behind."

"Got it sir." Mike *did not* want to piss him off. He stood up and walked out the door.

On his walk home, he had time to think about everything Hopper said. Did he like El?

Yeah. He did. But it was something more. When he thought I'd her, he'd get this uncontrollable fuzziness that would spread throughout his body.

God, it was cheesy. But it was so true.

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### *The Day of the Party*

El called Mike to see if he could hang out. After all, it was her birthday! "Hey Mike, what do you wanna do today?"

"Uhm, I can't."

"Can't what? Hang out? But.." El was confused as to why he said that he couldn't hang out. It was her birthday, and just the other day he promised to do some thing special. "But it's my birthday."

"I know," she heard Mike sigh. "It's just, my nana. She got really sick last night, yknow, with that thing she has... and I have to FaceTime her."

Since when did Mike have a super sick grandma? What *thing* was he talking about? "So.. can I come over after?"

"No!"

Okay.. something was definitely going on.

"Oh shoot," Mike was frantic. "I, uh, Nana is calling! Gotta go!" He hung up.

El stormed over to Max's. El *couldn't believe* that he was lying, *again*. Especially because just a few days ago, they had gone through this same scenario! She told Max about everything that happened. Max's

solution, was of course, to go to the mall.

"C'mon, we can take the bus. And it'll be fun! We can get you a new, cute outfit. Mike won't know what but him." Max smiled as she grabbed El's hand and pulled her to the bus stop.

Soon enough, the two were back at the mall. They went into the Gap and had a photo shoot, they went to the skate shop where they tried out some of the new boards. Let's just say.. El fell over a number of times. Then they went down to Scoops Ahoy where they got a free sundae for El's birthday.

For some reason Max wanted to walk home. "So.. have you come to terms with your feelings for Mike?"

"What?" El could feel heat rising to her cheeks. "I don't- I don't like Mike!"

Max *mhmed*. "I bet he feels the same way." She smirked.

Max burst out laughing at the look on El's face. El stuttered, "What do- What do you? No.. What?"

"Gosh, you should see the way you look at him. And the way he looks at you. And hear the way you guys talk about each other!" Max giggled.

"He talks about me?" El's voice was small. She hung her head down, but only because she wanted to hide her smile from Max.

Max knew that they were a couple of houses down from Mike's. Max was proud of herself, she had kept the conversation going this whole walk to El was distracted. She pulled out her phone and text him to get ready. "All the time. I talk to Lucas about it." Max smiled.

My, how the tables have turned. Now it was El's time to smirk. "You should hear how you talk about *Lucas*."

"Well at least I can admit that I have feelings for him." Max turned beet red, and cursed, "Did I just say that out loud? Oh god I just said that out loud."



El almost had to stop walking because she was laughing so hard. "You- you just- oh my god-" she burst into more giggles.

Max tried to shush her.

"Here," El straightened up. "If you yell that you have feelings for Lucas Sinclair, I will admit that I may have feelings for Mike. To you," she narrowed her eyes. "Only you. And you can tell Lucas, but not Mike!"

"Deal!" Max cleared her throat. "I HAVE FEELINGS FOR LUCAS SINCLAIR!" She yelled.

El burst into more giggles.

Max turned into someone's driveway. El recognized the house right away. They were at Mike's. "I don't want to be here."

Max walked over and grabbed El's hand. "I promise this will be good. All you need to do is let go of all your anger right now."

El let Max lead her up to the front porch. Max turned the knob and pushed the door open-

*"SURPRISE!"*

El gasped. "You guys!" Everyone she cared about was there. Her dad, Dustin, Will, Lucas, Max, and most importantly, Mike. She went around and hugged everyone.

"Kiddo, you should be thanking Mike. All I did was show up, he our this whole thing together." Hopper let go of his daughter.

She walked over to Mike and threw her arms around his neck. The joy she was feeling was unexplainable. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Mike laughed. "You're welcome, El." He together his arms around her. "But I'm sorry for lying about my nana. I just had to make sure you didn't see what we were doing!"

"It's okay," El laughed it off, but she felt a pang of guilt. "Something

good came out of it. This.. this is amazing." El had never had something like this happen for her. The joy she was feeling was unexplainable. And when Hopper wasn't looking at them, she stood up on her tip toes and kissed Mike on the cheek. She whispered, "Thank you." And then let go of the boy.

El turned around and looked at Max and Lucas. They were holding hands! Max gave her a thumbs up, and then slyly pointed to Mike. She looked at him. He was standing there looking at Lucas, smiling and holding his cheek. Lucas mouthed something and he nodded.

All the sudden, the chatter in the room was interrupted by Will turning off the lights. "Happy birthday to you," He started.

"Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Eleven," Everyone sang, "Happy birthday to you!"

El blew out the candles on the humongous Eggo Extravaganza happily. "Thank you guys so much!"

Hoppers radio buzzed. A voice came through, saying Hopper was needed down at the station. "Well, I gotta go. You kids have fun. I'll see you at home El." He came over and hugged his daughter once more. "Happy birthday sweetheart." And he left.

Everyone got some of the Eggo extravaganza. I guess Mike really did know how close her dad was to her heart. Max told her he even went and asked him to come to the birthday in person! Along with that statement, however, she also said that Mike and El were meant to be.

Time had passed quickly at the birthday party. Now the group was sitting in the basement, playing truth or dare.

"Okay..." Lucas rubbed his hands together and smirked. "Mike.. what's the most embarrassing moment you've had on tour?"

Mike groaned, "Do I have to answer?"

"Yes!" Everyone chorused.

"Well, I tripped over my own guitar chord, while I was on stage. I face planted, and then tried to get up again. Once again, I tripped

over the same damn guitar cord." Everyone started laughing at this point. "Then I rolled off the stage and broke my ankle."

"Poor- poor Mike!" El said in between fits of laughter.

Mike laughed too. "Well, now I get to do someone." He smirked. "Hmm.. Max. Truth. Or. Dare."

"Truth." Max was playing it safe.

She knew what Mike was going to ask before he asked it. "Do you like Lucas?"

She sighed in faux annoyance. "Did you not hear me shout it to the world earlier?" Everyone laughed. "Well actually, I did it so El would tell me something. Soo... El. Truth or dare."

"Dare." Where this newfound confidence came from, El had no idea.

"I dare you to tell me the answer to the question I asked you earlier."

El didn't even have to think about it. After what Mike did for her today? There was no doubt in her mind that she was definitely catching feelings for this boy. "Yes. Yes I definitely do."

"Aw come on," Dustin threw his hands up in the air dramatically. "You gotta tell us what the question was. You gotta!"

"No can do." Max said. Everyone laughed at Dustin's annoyance.

El snuck a glance at Mike. Thanks to him, this had been the best birthday party she had ever had.

In her few years of actually living, of course. Oh, when would she tell Mike about her life before Hopper? Finding out that she had telekinesis could send him running for the hills.

## 4. Singing in the Rain

The summer was passing way too fast for Mike's liking. It had already been two weeks since El's birthday party. Mike's feelings for El had magnified... and Max could tell. She's pulled him to the side once or twice to say something about it. He was actually a little bit envious of Lucas and Max's relationship. The two had barely know each other before they started dating, and in a month and a half of knowing El, he could barely work up the nerve to ask her to go get ice cream with him.

For the record, he had asked her. It took forever, but he did it. In all honesty, Mike knows the reason he keeps pushing his feelings for her aside.

He's scared. The last time he dated someone, they dated for 7 months. It was when the band was first becoming popular. Her name was Caroline Monet, and she was an actress. But Mike later learned that she cheated on him twice, and was only using him for the added amount of fame she was getting.

Another thing to think about is- why him? Why Mike? El was amazing. She was gorgeous, brilliant, and really easy to get to know. And there was something.. special about her. She shines brighter than anyone in the room.. Mike just hasn't exactly our the pieces together as to why.

Of course, he was *the* Mike Wheeler. Who sings and plays the bass in his band, Stranger Things. But El didn't care about any of that. In fact, she had once told him that she didn't ever want to be in the spotlight. She said that that's why she lives so under that radar.

Mike couldn't put her through that, could he? No. He wasn't that selfish. And besides, they were best friends, what if they broke up? Mike couldn't lose her.

Mike looked outside. The sky was dark and cloudy, but El was still skipping up to his front door.

Mike opened it before she had a chance to knock. "Hi." He smiled.

"Wanna walk down to the quarry?"

Mike looked up to the sky again. "Are you sure? It looks like it's about to pour?"

"We'll be fineee," She grabbed his hand and pulled him out the door.

Mike got butterflies as they walked down the road, holding hands. El didn't seem to notice, or care, so he decided he wouldn't pull away this time.

Mike noticed a fallen tree as they were walking. "When did that happen?"

"What?" El looked to where he was pointing. "Oh. Well, every time it storms really bad here in Hawkins, at least one tree falls down. It's like a curse. Normally there's just a little rain, maybe some lightning and thunder. So I doubt we're in for a big one tonight." She laughed.

Mike wasn't as sure as El. Winds were kicking up, and the closer they got to the quarry the more Mike thought about how bad of an idea it was. "Maybe we should turn around?"

"Please, just a little longer?" She turned to him and gave him puppy eyes, which she had learned from Max. "If it starts to rain really bad, I promise we can turn around."

"Fine," Mike chuckled a bit, "But when we're dead in a ditch, don't blame me."

"I'll take all the blame," El laughed quietly.

They had gotten to the quarry faster than Mike expected them too. They walked over to their normal hang out place.

"You think Lucas and Max will last?"

El smiled at the thought. "Yeah, I do. Max really likes Lucas."

"Lucas too. You should hear the way he rambles on and on about her. They have an official date thing soon, right?" Mike was a little envious. Just a bit.

"Yes. I'm happy that she's happy."

Mike watched her as she started talking about the joke Dustin told her last night. When she laughed about it again, her eyes sparkled. He watched as her curly hair lifted and then settled in the wind. God, he was going to hate leaving Hawkins. He knew that as soon as he was gone, another guy would come sweep her off her feet.

"Mike?" El snapped in front of his face. "Mike! It's raining, we've got to go." She stood up and grabbed his hand again.

"Oh. Yes," he stood up. "Let's go."

"Doo do, de doo dooo..." El started skipping, dragging Mike behind her. She hummed.

Mike laughed. He might be cold and wet, but he was with El, and there was no place he'd rather be... and damn, he wanted to kiss her.

El twirled, still holding onto Mike's hand. "I'm singgggg in the rain," she sang, "just singing in the rain!"

"What a glorious feeling, I'm happy again!" Mike continued, "I'm laughing at cloud so dark up above." They were definitely going to catch colds.

El giggled. "The suns in my heart, and," Mike twirled her again, this time bringing her close to him. "I'm ready.. for love." She whispered breathlessly.

"El," suddenly it felt like his blood was electric, tickling him from head to toe. "Can I kiss you?"

He heard her breath catch as she looked up at him with wide golden eyes. There was a loud *snap* behind him, and her eyes flicked over. "Mike, move!" El shoved him behind her, and raised her arms. He saw what was happening. Winds had knocked a tree over, and it was falling.. but, not?

"El? Why isn't that tree falling.. and why aren't we running?" Mike stammered. Panic had knitted all of his organs up.

He watched as blood trickled out of her nose. "You're bleeding!"

And the tree did come down, but softly. The only noise it had made was when it had snapped. Which was insane.. and not possible. This tree could've killed them. *They should be dead.*

She turned to him and wiped the blood away. He saw that she was crying, but he couldn't tell if the water on her face was blood or tears or rain, all colored red. "Mike, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry! I lied, I lied!" She started sobbing.

"Hey, what?" Mike pulled her into a hug. "No, no, don't cry. Please don't cry. You haven't done anything wrong. Let's go home, alright?"

"You're gonna- you're gonna hate me, oh my god!" She choked up.

"I'm not gonna hate you," El wouldn't look at Mike. "El, look at me," He pulled her chin gently, so he would see her eyes. "I *promise*. Okay?"

"Pr-promise?"

"Yeah."

---

Mike and El stumbled into the house, scaring Dustin to near death. "Holy- What the?" Dustin cursed. "You guys went out there? In *that* weather?"

"Well technically, we got stuck." Mike looked at El. "And some crazy things happened."

God, El felt terrible. And to think that she had yelled at Mike for his secret? How would he react to hers? El could feel her throat closing up and her eyes start to water.

"We'll be upstairs!" Mike quickly pulled her up before she burst out crying again. He pulled her into a hug. "Hey, hey.. it's okay."

"You're gonna hate me!" Her voice was wobbly. "You'll want to yell at me, I'm so sorry."

"No, I won't yell, I promise."

That made El cry harder. She knew it was supposed to be comforting, but it made her feel terrible. Because Mike kept a big secret, just like she had, and she yelled. She remembered how miffed she was, and how scared Mike looked.

Mike hugged El until her sobs turned to sniffles. He ran and grabbed some towels. "You ready to talk now?" He asked her.

She nodded. El took a shaky breath. "My real name is Jane Ives. When I was a baby, I was kidnapped. My mother was told that I was stillborn. Instead of being with her, I was raised in Hawkins National Laboratory." She swallowed. "There was a man who took me. Dr Martin Brenner. He raised me as 011, and he was the only father I ever knew."

Papa- Dr. Brenner- took me because I'm special." Mike's brow furrowed. "He took ten other kids as well. Because we can do... things. Things that other people can't do." El grabbed his hand. "I don't know where the others are now. I wish I did. The things that he had us do—" El choked up. "God, Mike. It was horrible."

She told Mike about everything. How she didn't get out until she was fourteen. How Hopper found her in the woods, and soon after, adopted her. One time, she ran away to find her mom.. and then again to find Kali, a girl who was with her in the lab.

She told him about the gruesome things too. How if she didn't do what she was told, she was forced to sleep in a closet-sized room. And about how she now has terrible claustrophobia from it. She has nightmares still, that wake Hop up. She told him about the.. *things that she had to do just to please Papa. And how worst of all, he's still out there. The lab might be shut down, but he is not.*

"So," Mike laid down. "You caught the tree? With your mind?"

"Yes."

Mike rubbed his forehead, and then wiped at his eyes. "God, El, I'm so sorry. I know it doesn't help, but I am. No one deserves that."



El laid down right next to him. "I have this, too." She pulled down her damp sleeve to show her tattoo.

Mike raised his arm up. El thought he was going to touch the 011, but instead he clasped their hands together. El almost smiled, if it weren't for the heavy air that was surrounding them.

"He's still out there?"

El gulped. "Yes."

"He can still hurt you?"

He voice quickened. "I suppose."

They were silent.

"You don't hate me?"

Mike leaned on his arm. "Of course I don't hate you, El."

She smiled. He shook his head like a dog, sending water everywhere.

"Mike!" El screeched. She sat up and playfully shoved him.

He laughed at her. El rolled her eyes and laid back down. Though, she couldn't fake annoyance for long. The butterflies in her stomach caused her to smile.

"Whatcha smiling about?" Mike smirked.

El turned red. "I just- I thought of a funny joke! That Max told me.. yesterday."

"Do tell."

"I— uh— why did the chicken cross the road?"

"To get to the other side?" Mike laughed. "That's pretty common."

"No, no," El wade her hand in the air. "To go to the idiots house."

"Okay?"

"Knock knock."

"Who's there?" Mike shook his head again.

"The chicken!" El stifled her giggles.

I don't— oh El," Mike hit her with a pillow. "You're so mean to me!"

El burst out laughing. "Okay, what do you call a fake noodle?"

Mike shrugged.

"An impasta!"

He rolled his eyes, but smiled. "You're so stupid."

"Why did the scarecrow win an award?" El asked.

"I don't know El," Mike hit her with a pillow again, but he was also laughing.

She batted it away. "Because he was out-standing in his field!" El laughed harder at this joke.

"Oh my god— El, shut— up," Mike said in between fits of laughter.

"Make me," El sat up and put her hands on her hips confidently.

Mike stopped laughing. He grabbed one of her hands and pulled over, her so they were inches apart. "Happily."

And then he kissed her.

The butterflies had turned into fireworks that were exploding in El's belly. She wrapped her arms around his neck and smiled into the kiss. It was her first kiss, and damn, was she glad about that. She wouldn't rather have it with anyone else.

Dustin knocked on the door. "Alright lovebirds, it's time to part. Hopper is here for El." Did Dustin know they were kissing?

El broke away, still smiling. "Thank you."

Mike grabbed her hand when she stood up. He walked her to the door, and when she was about to leave, he pulled her close again. "Text me when you get home?" He whispered.

"Of course." El looked into his eyes once more. There was a sparkle that wasn't there before, and it twinkled at her before she walked away to her dad's truck. As soon as she was inside it, she caged all the butterflies and cooled her hot cheeks.

"El," Hopper sighed. "You left your phone in your room again. Now I know that you're perfectly safe with these boys, for God's sake they have a million body guards, but *please* start taking it with you. I need a way to contact you in case anything happens."

"I'm sorry, I forgot." El smiled. "I promise that I'll remember it tomorrow— and the day after that, and the day after *that*."

"That's more like it," Hopper laughed and then turned up the radio.

---

As soon as El had gotten home and eaten dinner, she rushed into her room. She picked up her phone and called Max.

"Oh Max," She sighed giddily. "You'll never believe what happened today!"

## 5. Hehe

Once again, Mike was on his way to the police station. But this time, for a different reason. He was going to ask Hopper's permission to date his daughter. Yet again, he had ditched his body guards. He had been getting texts from Steve, his manager/agent, all morning about how he had sto stop, it wasn't good, blah blah blah. Bit would he stop? Nah.

Hopper was just getting to the station when Mike walked up. "You're here.. again. You ditched your body guards?"

"Yessir."

"How many more times will you be doing that?" Hopper chuckled. "I guess I'm gonna have to send a squad car to patrol you until you take 'em with you."

Mike laughed nervously. His pulled on one of his curls, a nervous habit that he had picked up sometime in the past few years. Hopper noticed. "What's got you nervous, kid?"

"Um, well, sir.." Mike slowly raised his eyes to Hopper's face. "It's about El."

The Cheif glared at him.

Mike shrunk away. "I care about her!" He winced, his voice had come out squeakier than normal. "A lot. I do, and I wanted to ask your permission...to ask her to be.. my girlfriend?"

If possible, Hopper's glare became colder and harder.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," Yet Mike was determined to ask El out. "But I mean it. I care about her, a lot. And if she said yes, I'd be the luckiest guy in the world." Mike had no idea where this newfound confidence had come from. "I know.. I know that you guys have gone through so much together, and I know that I don't deserve El. She deserves the whole world!"

But the point is, I really like her. I wouldn't do anything to hurt her."

Mike scratched his head. "And I know how hard you guys work to stay under the radar. I would never do anything to put her in the spotlight, not unless you were both okay with it."

Hopper began to smile. *Was that good?* Mike was questioning his choice of words.

"Damn, I own Maxine some money," Hopper smiled. "You should see the way you and El look at each other. But kid," Hopper leaned down so He was closer to Mikes face. "If you do anything, *anything*, that could our her in danger, or hurt her, you will never be allowed to see my daughter again. Do you understand?"

Mike squeaked, "Yessir!"

Hopper laughed and then patted Mike on the back. "That's more like it, now go get your girl!"

Mike left with a smile on his face. The smile dissapesred when the texts he was getting from Steve turned into a phone call. "Steve?"

"Took you long enough to answer. Listen Wheeler, security is getting tighter as soon as you get back to LA, you hear?" Mike could *hear* the annoyance in Steve's voice. Though, Mike wasn't fazed by it. Steve was more of a big brother to the band then a manager, and he knew that Steve loved them... though he could be a douche.

"Yep. Fine."

"That's not the only thing I wanted to tell you about." Steve sounded excited. "The fans are going to be itching for some drama as soon as you get back from this break. So I've planned a few staged paparazzi photos with Cami Torres. They'll be leaked—"

Mike interjected, "No! No staged photos with me."

"What? Why?"

Mike didn't want anything to get in the way of him and El. "Uh.. because."

There was a pause.

"It's because of this *El* girl, isn't it."

"I- uh- what?"

"Oh yeah." Steve chuckled. "Dustin has told me *all*about her. And Max."

*Screw Dustin's close relationship with Steve!* Mike groaned. "Of course he told you. But seriously, Steve, I was planning to ask her out today. And I didn't tell you because it's not something her family wants in the press right away, okay? So we should keep this on the DL, until they're ready."

"I get it. I guess I'll just have to get Will to do the photos."

Mike laughed, "Good luck with that!"

"Bye Wheeler. Have fun with your *girlfriendddd!*" Steve taunted, then hung up the phone.

Today was going to be a good day.

---

Max has come over as soon as El was awake. They had spent the morning talking about Lucas and Mike. But mainly Mike, as Max wanted to hear all about El's first kiss!

Max hadn't seen El this happy in a long time. It made Max feel happy too. "So... can you tell me again?"

El giggled, "Max! This would be the seventh time!

"Okay, okay," Max sighed happily. "But your dad owes me money."

El sat up. "You bet on this?"

Max looked away sheepishly. "Maybe?"

El laughed and threw a pillow at Max.

"You really like him?"

An idiotic grin grew on El's face. Her cheeks turned pink, and she exhaled, "I do. I really do."

Seeing her best friend like this made her miss Lucas. Which brought a thought to mind- "What are we going to do when they go back to LA? And then on tour?" She voiced it shakily.

"God, I don't even want to think about that Max." El levitated some pillows, spinning them in a circle.

The two girls were silent as they stared at the floating pillows.

Max's cell phone interrupted them. *It's Lucas!* She answered it hastily. "Lucas?"

"Hey, are you with El now?"

"Yeah I am." Though Lucas couldn't see it, Max smiled at the sound of his voice. "What's up?"

"Okay, you CANNOT tell El this. You promise?" His voice was low, as if he was whispering.

"I promise? What's this about?"

She heard Lucas inhale. "Mike is gonna ask her out."

Max squeaked. "What? You're kidding?"

"Nope!"

"Oh my god, that's amazing! Tell him I'm so proud of him."

"But you can't tell El, okay?" Lucas went back to whispering. "I'm not even supposed to be telling you, but you're my girlfriend."

El looked up at Max quizzically. Max giggled.

"Babeeee, *please* don't tell her!"

Max's stomach fluttered at what he called her. "My lips are sealed. I'll see you later?"

"Yeah, of course." Then they hung up.

"What was that all about?" El sat up. She was still levitating the pillows.

Max pressed her lips together. El grounded and then threw all the pillows at Max.

"Hey!" Max exclaimed. She threw them back. "My lips are sealed, missy. This is a good secret, okay? Something good will come out of it. I promise."

"Promise?"

"Yep." Max smiled brightly.

"I have an idea!"

"Do tell, I would love to know," Max mused.

"Can I try to levitate you?"

Max's jaw dropped. "Really? You can do that?"

El shrugged, "I can try. Just sit on the bed, that way if you fall it'll be a soft landing." The girls switched spots, so El was sitting on the floor and Max on the bed. El raised her arms and pointed them at Max.

Max offered a soft smile and said, "If it ends up outside your limits, it's okay." But inside, she knew she would be a little sad if it didn't work.

El got a little crease in her brow when she was concentrating hard. Some blood trickled out of her nose. But before she knew it, Max was slowly floating off the bed.

"El!" Max gasped, "You're doing it! Oh my god!" Max floated up high enough to stretch her arms out and touch the ceiling. Both girls laughed.

But the moment of joy was cut short. El was startled by her phone ringing, and she dropped Max onto the bed. El rushed over to her



phone.

Max groaned. "A little more careful next time?"

"It's Mike."

"Well answer it!"

El smiled and put the phone up to her ear. "Hey Mike. The quarry at 3:15? Yeah sure. And we're all going to the arcade after? Sounds great, I'm sure Max will be up for it. Okay," El giggled at something Mike said. "Yes, see you then!"

Max sat up. "What's going on?"

"Mike wants to meet me at *three-one-five* at the quarry!" In her excitement, she resumed her old speaking patterns. "And then afterwards, we're all going to go to the arcade."

Max wiggled her eyebrows at El. "The quarry, huh. *Alone.*"

El was wiping blood off her face, and she threw the dirty tissues at Max. "Shut up!"

"Ewww, I don't want your bloody tissues."

Max saw a weird look pass across El's face. "Wait, Max, I kissed Mike."

"Yes? We've been over this, you liked kissing Mike." Max threw the dirty tissues in the bin.

"But he's my other best friend. What if things get really awkward? Because we kissed?"

*Well, it couldn't have been that awkward.* After all, he was going to ask El out. "Trust me El, it sounds like he liked it."

"What should I wear?" El threw open the closet with her mind.

"This is gonna be fun!"

## 6. Not Quite A Chicken

Mike was nervous. Very, very nervous. So nervous that he was, in fact, pacing. All his friends had hyped him up for this moment, yet all he could think about was the worse case scenarios. *What if she says no?*

But she did kiss him the other night. Well, she didn't stop him from kissing her. But what if she hated it? What if Mike had just made things awkward. Mike had no experience with girls, *ever*. All the girls he has ever been around have been set up by Steve.

Sure, he could perform in front of a couple thousand people, but girls? No way. However, even with his doubt, just the thought of El made Mike smile ecstatically.

"Mike?"

Mike turned around. "Oh- Eleven, you're here."

She smiled at her. "Yes I am. Three-one-five."

"Wow," Mike checked his watch and laughed awkwardly. "It is exactly 3:15, isn't it?"

"What can I say, I'm a stickler for timing. Hey," She walked over to him. "Is everything okay?"

Mike waved it off. "Yeah, Yeah. Everything's great."

"Well then," She smiled and beckoned him over to where she was standing. "I want to show you what Max and I just figured out I can do."

He walked over and she told him to sit down, and then she backed away. Her nose started bleeding, and Mike was confused as to what she was doing. "El? Wha—"

Mike realized he couldn't feel the ground anymore. He looked down. "Holy- El?" Mike laughed, and he saw El break into a smile.

She lowered him onto the ground before her knees gave out, and then she too was on the ground. Mike rushed over to her. "Are you okay?"

She rubbed her forehead. "Fine, just a little dizzy. It takes a lot of energy."

Mike laid down next to her. "That was super cool."

She laughed. "Yeah, Max thought so too." They spent the afternoon talking and laughing, just as they should.

Mike's phone dinged. It was Will telling him that they were all at the arcade, and to head over soon. "When do you wanna head to the arcade? Everyone's there already. And it's going to get dark soon."

El got up. "Let's start walking there now? Just let me take care of this," She motioned to her nose. They really should've cleaned it up earlier, but they had quickly fallen into conversation. It seemed that whenever these two were together, they never ran out of things to talk about. She walked down to the quarry and washed it away.

*C'mon Mike, ask her! Preferably before the arcade!*

The two started walking to the arcade. El was going on about her and Max and what they did today. Mike tried to listen, but he was caught up in his own thoughts. All he had to do was start the question, and then technically he had to finish it, right? He couldn't just start something and then leave her hanging.

God, Mike had never felt this way before. It was seriously messing him up... but in a good way. How could one girl have the ability to change him so much?

Mike stopped walking. "Hey El?" *This was it.*

"Yeah?" El turned to him. "Something wrong?"

"No, the opposite. Well yes. No. Nothings wrong." This was starting out terribly. "Damn, I'm terrible at this."

El laughed. "I'm not so sure what you mean?"

"What I'm *trying* to say is," Mike tugged on one of his curls. "I really like you? Not a question. I do. Really like you. Um.. Well I mean we kissed, damn. I'm sorry." He covered his face.

El giggled. She grabbed his hands. "It's okay Mike, you're doing great."

He swung their clasped hands. "Do you want to be my girlfriend?"

"Mike, I would love to be your girlfriend," She stood up on her tiptoes and kissed him. It felt like it was the Fourth of a July because of all the fireworks he was experiencing.

She came away blushing. Mike was shocked, and extremely happy, that she actually said yes. "Really?" He whispered.

"Yes Mike," El laughed. "I just don't know how I'm going to tell my dad."

"He knows." Mike deadpanned.

"What?"

"I mean, I asked him for permission to ask you to be my girlfriend." Mike rubbed his head awkwardly. "I just, I know how much you two have been through. And I didn't want to get in the way of your relationship, because I know how close you are."

El smiled a dazzling smile. "That's really sweet of you."

"Well, what can I say," Mike said smugly, "I'm a pretty sweet guy."

"Shut up," El laughed and playfully shoved him.

"Now now, that's no way to treat your new boyfriend." Mike chuckled, and reached down to hold her hand as they started walking again. He didn't mess it up!

---

El was unbelievably happy. Her and Mike walked the whole way to the arcade, talking and laughing, but importantly: holding hands!

A body guard escorted them to the back room where they would be hanging out with everyone else. Max stood up as they walked in, and immediately noticed the couple holding hands.

She shrieked, "Ah! El! He didn't chicken out?"

Mike was flabbergasted. "Me? Chicken out? No way!" Everyone laughed hard at that.

They had fun the rest of the night... well.. Max and El did. The boys were a bit upset at the fact that MadMax *destroyed* them at the game Dragon's Lair.

Will walked over to where El was sitting. "You good?"

"Yeah," El was focusing on a board game hung up on the wall. "Have you ever done an Ouija Board?" **(Pronounced wii-jii for anyone who doesn't know)**

Will grimaced. "No, but they sound pretty freaking scary."

"I think we should take it home." El was infatuated with the idea of talking to spirits.

"Really?"

"Yes. Besides," She laughed, "It's probably bogus. I doubt anything will actually happen. But if we do what to scare the others.. I could do some stuff."

Will smirked. "You're probably right." He raised his voice. "Guys! El and I have an idea!"

They all turned to Will and El. El flicked her fingers, and the box flew over to her. A couple days after she told Mike, she had given Mike the okay to tell the rest of the guys. That way they know how important it is for El and Mike's relationship to stay secret.

"Let's take the Ouija Board home and do it!" She smiled.

"Aw hell nah," Dustin paled. "My granny did one of those things a while back, and she hasn't been the same since."

"Cmon, Dustin," Max poked his arm. "It'll be fun! They aren't even real anyways, so there's no harm in trying."

Lucas put his arm around Max's shoulders. "I'm in. But can we stop somewhere for dinner?"

"Fooodddddd," Dustin moaned and stuck his arms out like a zombie.

Mike piped up, "There's a little diner on the way home, Bobby can probably drive us."

Max turned to him. "Bobby?"

"One of the body guards."

Max nodded in understanding.

"Okay, but how do we know Keith will let us take the Ouija Board home with us?" Lucas asked.

El and Max smirked at each other. El said, "We got this. You can just head to the car, we'll be right behind you!"

Mike looked back and forth between the the two girls. "If you say so.." The boys walked to the car, only stopped once by some girls who recognized them.

Max and El hurried up to Keith. "Oh my god, Keith!" Max gasped.

"This box," El shook it, "It was making sounds—"

Max interrupted, "Terrifying sounds!"

"Yes, very scary." El nodded solemnly. "It's very haunted."

"And you definitely don't want a haunted board in your arcade!"

El shook it harder. "Bad for business. So we're just going to borrow it —"

Max waved her arms around. "So we can de-ghost-ify it! We're the Hawkins Ghost Busters." She pulled out a twenty dollar bill and handed it to him.

A look of confusion passed across Keith's face, but he took the money.

El made the box start to float and shake uncontrollably. Keith screamed and ran behind the counter.

"We'll bring it back when it's de-ghost-ified! Thanks!" El waved at him, and then the girls ran out of the arcade giggling.

El slid into the car right next to Mike, and he put his arm around her. "What happened in there?"

El and Max looked at each other and laughed even harder.

"Hey, can someone turn on the radio?" Will asked.

Someone turned it in. Coincidentally, the song that was on was one the boy's.

"Oh nooooo," Mike covered his face in embarrassment. The others, however, did the exact opposite. They sang it at the top of their lungs, only fueling the girls laughter.

El paused and turned to Mike. "Is this you singing?"

Mike groaned, "Maybe.."

"You have a nice voice," **(think Daniel Seavey mixed with Finn's voice now)** El smiled and leaned into him. Mike mumbled a quiet *thank you* into El's shoulder.

Dustin turned around to look at her. "You wanna hear a nice voice? Well get a load of this," The next voice on the radio was Dustin's. He had a perfect run, and he sang it along with the song for El. Everyone laughed, but he was right, he did have a good voice.

As the rest of the group was jamming out, Mike leaned in towards El again. He whispered, "Do you think the board is real?"

El took a pause before whispering back, "I don't know. I've done it once before, with Max, and it was weird. It gave me the chills. I believe in spirits, sure, but I don't know about the board."

"Do you promise not to use your powers on anything?"

"Yeah, I promise." She sighed, "I doubt anything will happen though."

"You're probably right." Mike said.

El looked at him when he turned to look out the window. She couldn't tell if he knew she was staring, but honestly, she didn't care if he did. This was her *boyfriend*. The word sent joy flowing through her. She remembered the way that the magazine had described Mike. 'Freckles to *die* for.' I mean... they weren't wrong.

El was watching Mike as he joined back into the conversation. He laughed at something Lucas had said, and she watched him smile. The car passed under a streetlight, and for a moment the light hit Mike *just right*, and damn, she noticed how Mike had such an unfairly gorgeous face. His cheekbones were defined, his jawline was so *damn sharp*. How could *she* manage to get *Mike*?

But she wasn't just admiring his looks. She saw how the corners of his eyes crinkled up when he laughed, and he had the most adorable dimples and oh— she had definitely been staring far too long now, Mike was smiling at her.

She zoned back into the conversation, it was something about Dungeons and Dragons? The car had pulled up to the diner now, and the group rushed inside. Surprisingly, it was empty. It was close to sliding time, but the chef was more than happy to feed the hungry kids. El looked around at her friend group. She realized how lucky she was, not just to have Mike, but to have all of them! Not because they were famous, El couldn't care less. She would love these people just the same if they were some random boys, and Max, that she had picked up of the street.

Mike leaned down and kissed El in the red booth. The night has started out perfect at this diner.

If only it would stay that way.



## 7. Ouija Board Tings

El smiled and looked around at her freinds. They were now back at the boy's house, and had set up the Ouija Board in their basement.

"Okay guys," El pulled out her phone. "I think there are specific rules we need to follow. So I'll read them off of the official Ouija website."

Dustin stood up. "I really don't think we should be doing this guys."

Will laughed. "We'll be fine Dustin, you can even go up to your room if you don't want to be a part of it."

Dustin nodded. "Yknow, I think I will do that. Thanks for the suggestion!" And then he sprinted up to his room.

El started reading the rules in an eerie voice to set the mood. "Rule number five: never use the Ouija Board alone." She could feel Mike shiver behind her. "Rule number seven: Only one person should talk to the spirits.. rule number eleven: Don't leave the planchette on the board." She read the rest of the rules in her normal voice, easing the tension in the basement.

"You guys ready?" Max asked. "I can be the leader, if you want."

"That sounds great." Will smiled. "Let's get started!"

Mike sat up behind El and put his free arm around her. His other hand had two fingers on the planchette, like the rest of the group. "Anyone else thinking that maybe Dustin was right?"

Lucas scoffed. "We'll be fine."

"Okay," Max inhaled. "Are there any spirits who would like to talk to us?"

Everyone held their breath. Nothing happened.

Lucas groaned, "I was actually hoping something—"

The planchette started moving slowly towards YES. Mike tightened

his grip around El.

El looked up. Excitement coursed through her veins. "It's moving!"

El looked at Will. He mouthed, *Are you moving it?*

*I swear it's not me!* El shook her head no.

Max shushed everyone. "What should we call you?"

Z-O-Z-O

"What kind of name is that?" Lucas chuckled.

"Lucas," Will hissed. "No disrespect!"

"Ah, right, sorry."

El watched Max grab Lucas's hand. Lucas smiled. *Gosh, they're so cute together.* Were her and Mike like that?

Max spoke up again. "Do you have good intentions?"

When Max asked that, El's stomach dropped. El didn't understand why, but she felt a horrible feeling boil up in her.

YES.

Something did not feel right about this. Tension had filled the air again, and it wasn't going away. El looked over at Will. She saw him shiver, and he put his hand up to the back of his neck.

"Are you okay?" El asked.

Will laughed weakly. "Yeah, yeah, fine. Max should continue." *That was an obvious lie.*

"Why are you here?"

FOR.

Everyone looked confused. "For.." Max trailed off.

Y-O-U.

El was trembling now. Mike turned his face into her hair. He whispered, "You okay?"

El shook her head no. "I want to take my hand off, okay? I think Dustin was right."

As soon as she finished her sentence, the planchette shot to the other side of the board.

NO.

Lucas's jaw dropped. "Now that's freaky man."

El tried to take her hand off the planchette. "Oh my god," She said.

Mike's voice was higher than normal. "What?"

El tugged at her hand again. "I can't move it, I can't take my hand off!"

Will ripped his hand away from the board. "This is messed up."

O.

"Guys!" Max shouted. "Shut up! It's spelling something!"

11.

011.

011.

Mike grabbed El's wrist and pulled. It seemed nothing could move her hand!

Tears dropped down El's face. "I want to say goodbye! Someone move it to goodbye, please!"

Mike took his hand off the board and wrapped his arms around El. "Shh, it's okay. We're gonna say goodbye, and everything will be okay."

The board moved to 011 faster and faster, never pausing.

"Say goodbye Max!" Will yelled.

Max yelled right back at him. "It won't let me!"

Mike turned to her. "Well you have to do something!"

"Don't you think I'm trying?!"

Before long, Mike, Will, and Max were in a shouting contest.

"Guys," Lucas mumbled.

"Guys!"

"GUYS!" With his free hand, he smacked Will in the side. "It's doing something! Remember, the rules said never to let it do that!"

El opened her eyes. It took a few moments for the tears to clear, but then she saw what it was doing. No longer was it moving to 011, it was doing a figure eight around the board. "Oh my God," She whispered.

When they read the rules earlier, they stated that any entity that was to touch all four corners of the board, go over the Ouija, go through the alphabet, go through the numbers, or make a figure eight was trying to escape from the other.. side.

Mike was shaking too, but he still held El tightly.

Max took a deep breath in, and then exhaled, shaking out all her tremors. "We are going to say goodbye now." Her voice was calm, but she was very pale.

NO.

Lucas cursed. He and Will looked at each other, before shoving the planchette over the goodbye.

El pulled her hand away so fast that she elbowed Mike in the face. "Oh god," She cupped his face in her hands, "Are you alright?"

Mike crinkled his nose. "Ow," He opened one eye. "Yknow, you could give me something to help the pain, now that this is all over." Mike wiggled his eyebrows. El giggled and kissed him.

The moment of happiness was just a distraction from what had just happened. After that, they were all sitting in fright-filled silence, staring at the board.

Will spoke up first, "Did we do that right?"

"Man," Lucas shook his head. "I doubt it."

All th sudden, a loud crash sounded through the house, followed by a high pitched scream. El accidentally threw the board across the room with her mind out of pure terror, causing Lucas to scream. Her blood was ice cold.

Dustin ran down the stairs, letting out a string of profanities. "What the hell did you guys do!"

"What- what happened?" El could hear her voice quaking.

"I was just sitting in my bed, playing on my phone when my guitar FLEW across the room!" Dustin panted, "I ran all the way down here! The cabinets were opening and—"

Something glass-like smashed. Mike jumped this time, and he grabbed El's arm. "We need to get out of here!"

"No way in hell I'm going back up there again!" Dustin pointed up the stairs. As soon as he dropped his arm the lights flickered; once, twice, and then they were choking on darkness.

El heard Max scream. Both her and Lucas shouted, "Max!"

A pair of arms went around her waist, and now it was El's time to scream.

"Relax!" El heard Mike's voice. It comforted her, but only a little. "It's me. Mike."

"Can everyone says their names?" El reached out into the darkness.

"Max,"

"Lucas,"

"Dustin- Hey ow, Will, I know I'm sexy but stop pinching my butt!"

"What the- I'm not touching your butt?"

"Oh hell to the no. Let's go guys!" Dustin started thumping through the darkness. "Oh, hey Lucas can you turn around? I think the stairs are behind you, but I mean I can't see so.."

"Dustin," Lucas paused. "Im over here.. with Max."

Everyone got quiet. The silence was terrible.

"Then," Dustin stammered. "Who did— who— *what* did I just run in to?"

Someone started walking around the room. El could hear long, drawn out shuffles. She squeezed her eyes shut and stopped tears from coming out.

Will whimpered. Dustin was taking shaky breaths in. She couldn't see, but El knew Max and Lucas were probably hugging each other tightly on the other side of the room. Mike still had his arms wrapped around her, and he tensed as the shuffles got louder.

"Okay guys," He said, "Someone better find the stairs so we can get the hell out of here!" He gently nudged El forwards.

Mike let go of El and they walked forwards. She could hear everyone's footsteps, but there was still something shuffling around. She got the chills.

"I found them!" Lucas yelled. Everyone rushed towards the sound of his voice, and eventually they all were clumped together. She could barely make out Max's shape as she rushed up the stairs.

As she stepped up, someone grabbed her wrist. "Mike?" She whispered, "Mike, it's okay, just step up," Mike didn't respond to her. Instead, he tugged on her arm. "Is this some sort of sick joke?" The

footsteps of her friends faded away as she heard them reach the front door.

El realized she couldn't hear the shuffles anymore. The thing tugged on her wrist, and she let out a shrill scream. "HELP! SOMEONE—" The *thing* pulled her down onto the cold basement floor, and in this moment, El was sure she was going to die. She screamed again, louder, hoping someone would hear her from outside.

In a moment of strength, she shoved the thing off of her. Then she used her powers to push it farther than it had already gone, and turned in direction of the stairs.

"El?!" Someone thudded down the stairs, "El? El, where are you?"

"Mike!" El could see his silhouette. "Run! Upstairs!"

They both sprinted back upstairs. El thrust the door shut behind her. Her body flowed with Adrenaline and they shoved open the doors, their friends were all illuminated by streetlights. They had grabbed bikes from the shed. El and Mike screamed at them to go, and go they did! El wrapped her arms around Mike on the bike, and he pedaled away in terror.

She turned in time to see the front door fling open.

## 8. The Return Of Dr Brenner

The man smiled a cruel, wicked smile as his creation came crawling back to him. He called it: The Demogorgon. He had created it to help him take back his life's work.

*Eleven.*

The demogirgin shuffled up to him, carrying nothing. *Damnit.* It didn't get the girl. *Oh well,* The man thought, *there was a camera attached to it for a reason.* He will have to go retrieve her himself.

How had she managed to get away this time? If she could get away from an otherworldly creature, could she get away from him?

No.

He would always be there, and he would always win.

After all, Dr Brenner was called *Papa* for a reason.



## 9. Relief

El used her mind to quickly unlock the locks on her door. She turned and ushered everyone inside her house.

"What was that?" Will turned around. His eyes were red and watery, as if he was going to cry.

El herself had to blink back tears. "I- I don't know.."

"I think we should all go into El's room and calm down," Max turned to El, "Could we set up all the blow up beds on your floor?"

"Um" El twirled her hair anxiously. "Yeah, sure. Do you want to come with me to grab them from the closet?"

"Okay, boys," Max pointed. "El's room is down that hall and the first door on the right. We'll be right there."

The two girls walked to the storage closet which held sheets, pillowcases, and mattresses. No one will probably go back to the house until some of the body guards had investigated, so it was good of Max to think about setting up for a sleepover-type-thing.

El turned to Max. Her voice was panicky. "That thing- it came- it came from the lab."

The color leached out of Max's face. "Are you sure?"

"Positive." El grabbed some sheets while Max pulled out the mattress boxes. Within 15 minutes, everything was set up.

El looked at Mike who was sprawled out on her bed. He hadn't spoken a word since he came back for her. She crawled over and laid next to him. "Are you okay?"

He just shrugged.

"Mike," El rolled onto her stomach to look at him. He didn't acknowledge her, instead he continued staring at the ceiling. "Is it that minster? Is that what's bothering you?"

"It came from Dr. Brenner?" He looked at her. "I overheard you and Max."

"Yea."

"Are there going to be more?" He asked.

El sighed. "I wish I could give you a straight answer. I don't understand Dr. Brenner. He has ulterior motives for everything. He could be planning *anything*."

Mike gulped. "Anything?"

El nodded. The boy sat up and pulled El with him. "How do we stop him?"

Now it was El's turn to shrug. Mike rubbed his brow. "God, El, I'm so sorry."

She removed his hand from his face and laced their fingers together. "It's okay! Let's just focus on the present. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." El wrapped his arms around his neck.

After a few moments, El pulled away. "I've got to get the tv."

"Nooooooooo," Mike grabbed her hand and pulled her back to him. "No you don't."

El giggled, "Don't you want entertainment?"

"No, I have you!" Mike smiled, "You're better than a silly T.V."

"Stop that!" El buried her red face in Mike's shoulder. He shook as he laughed at her fluster. "Stop laughing at meeee," El drawled.

"I can't help it, you're cute when you blush."

El squeaked and stood up. "That's it, I'm going!"

She walked into the living room, leaving a chuckling Mike behind. She let out a startled gasp as she ran straight into Lucas and Max making out on her couch!

Lucas jumped away from Max faster than the Flash. "El- uh- It's now what it looks like!"

Max threw a pillow at his head. "It's exactly what it looks like, dork. We were making out on her couch!"

El burst out laughing. "I was just grabbing the T.V. You two *lovebirds* can join us for a movie, or stay out here. Your choice!"

El walked into the room, followed by an embarrassed Lucas and a smug Max. With a flick of her fingers she set the TV set down infringement if the beds. Mike had moved over to Dustin and Will, and they were laughing at something on Dustin's phone. Mike turned and opened his arms to El. She grabbed the remote and shuffled into his arms.

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El looked around. Everyone was asleep except for her, but she felt Mike's arms tighten around her as she shifted. She whispered his name, "Mike."

"Mike," She poked his face, "Mike, Mike, Mike, Mike!"

He grabbed her hand and squished his eyes together. "Yes, yes. I'm awake now."

"What're we gonna do when you back back to LA?"

That made him open his eyes. "That came out of nowhere."

"What're we gonna do?"

"Uh," He rubbed his eyes. "Long distance? I mean you have a phone, I have a phone."

"Will you come visit?"

He smiled. "Of course I'll visit you!"

"You won't think Hawkins is boring? Because I know LA is supposedly so big and fancy, Hawkins is nothing." El looked down. "You won't

forget about me, right?"

"Eleven," Mike cupped her face in his free hand and tilted her chin up to him. "Look at me, Eleven, I will never, ever forget about you."

El felt her cheeks flush pink. "Promise?"

"I promise." He traced his thumb over her face. "God, you're so pretty El."

She giggled and kissed him on the cheek. "You can go back to sleep now."

Mike closed his eyes and went to sleep